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Digital Tourism Strategy and Digital Marketing for the Tourism Branding Europe

The French Experience as a Model

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Abstract

France remains one of the top tourist destinations for more than 80 million tourists a year. Its digital tourism is based on the partnership between public and private actors, local and international. It is committed to developing the tourism innovation ecosystem.

France is one of the developed countries in terms of support structures dedicated to tourism than other countries. Its activities remain a major carrier of wealth and jobs most affected by the digital revolution that enables customers to access a wide range of options online, so they book at the last minute via mobile phone quickly and with a click.

France builds the tourism strategy on determining the exact content of the offer (product policy) and pricing policy ,choosing the most appropriate physical and virtual places for the policy of distributing, selling, developing and qualifying the offer and guiding the promotion policy so that consumers are not only informed of the existence of the offer but are also convinced of its strengths (communication policy) for sustainable tourism development and for displaying French tourism engineering, relying on the French brand, building evaluation tools and obtaining a system to guide the tourism economy.

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Introduction

The use of the Internet has led to a radical change in the French tourism sector ,as the working methods and consumption patterns of tourism, travel, culture and entertainment have changed rapidly, and talking about global tourism has become specifically tourism and digital transformation that calls for changing the way we travel. It is one of the most important and fastest growing industries that bring its benefits to the local population and destination areas when planned and managed properly. Tourism can enhance livelihoods, integration, and protection of cultural heritage and natural resources compared to other sectors of activity. It is also characterized by providing better opportunities by creating millions of jobs in the labor market and in entrepreneurship and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. The rural population has also been able to access markets more easily and enhance their financial inclusion, but the transition to digital tourism is not easy for France. What is the strategy for developing this sector in the digital field to attract tourists and what is the digital marketing plan for the tourism brand in France?

First. France's Digital Tourism Strategy

The tourism industry in France has gradually opened up to the digital environment and integrated the needs and uses of consumers in communication and information strategies. The use of the Internet has become necessary for the field of tourism. Internet users are no longer hesitant to buy a trip online and share their experiences. Smartphones and tablets have become essential tools for organizing trips and visits, for making travel reservations, choosing the right destination for the tourist and traveler, comfortable accommodation and all their travel needs .Where tourism stakeholders seek to adapt to digital technologies and new information, in order to provide solutions in line with consumers' expectations across the world. Digital technologies are the key for tourism companies to have direct access to the global market in new travel destinations. Digital tourism is today the first sector of e-commerce that precedes cultural products and clothing and is an essential means of promotion and booking in the field of tourism.

Before talking about digital tourism in France, we will first begin with some of the main concepts of this study.

Strategy

The word 'strategy' comes from the Greek word strategos, a term used to define the art of the general in the army. Strategy is used in general to explain how a set of objectives, whether short-term or long-term, will be achieved. However, there is no general consensus on the definition of strategy or of the strategy concept with regard to its use in various settings, whether in business, government, sports, or civic society . It is argued that there is good strategy and bad strategy. In this regard, Rumelt (2012) stated: "A good strategy does more than urge us forward toward a goal or vision; it honestly acknowledges the challenges we face and provides an approach to overcoming them."[3]

Tourism's Definition

[3] JABULANI DHLAMINI : Strategy: An understanding of strategy for business and public policy settings , Journal of Contemporary Management, Volume 19 Issue 2, 2022 , p 2

Tourism is one of the fasted growing industries of the world, depending on the demand of people for travelling for pleasure and recreation .tourism is defined as: The first official definition of a tourist was drawn up in 1937 by the League of Nations, whose Economic Commission established that, "in order to make international tourism statistics more comparable", this expression should, in principle, be interpreted as "any person who travels for a period of 24 hours and less than one year to a country other than that of residence". It was only in 1983 that the World Tourism Organization began to include the concept of visitor and, consequently, tourist, in trips made by residents in their own country, provided that they qualify as tourist.[4]

Wahab (1977) signals that the first academic definition was created in 1911 by Herman von Schullern in his work Fremdenaerkehr und Volkswirkschaft as: 'the sum of the operations, mainly the economic ones which are directly connected to the entrance, permanence and displacement oĺ foreigners in an out of a country city or region,. The UNWTO has mainly been concerned with political, commercial and normative principles and doesn't approach the conceptual aspects. Its definition is adopted by several countries and organizations and has been the 'official' definition of tourism. It is a technical definition according to the following text: It comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. [5]

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing can be simply defined as "the achievement of marketing objectives through the use of digital technologies." These technologies include computers, tablets, mobile phones, connected devices—such as smartwatches or speakers—and the other platforms presented below.[6]

This definition reminds us that objectives are more important than tools, and that ends are more important than means. It's about achieving marketing-defined objectives (image, preference, customer engagement, retention rates, sales or market share, etc.)

France's Digital Tourism :

France is considered the first tourist destination in the world and a major sector in the French economy. In 2016, the Inter-Ministerial Tourism Committee took new measures to ensure that France remains the preferred destination for tourists around the world. The number of foreign visitors in 2018 reached 90 million, following in the footsteps of a strategy it has developed since 2015 aimed at attracting 100 million visitors in 2020. However, the health crisis of the coronavirus COVID-19 has changed these figures, but the French government has planned for this crisis and changed the course of its strategy. In addition, "domestic tourism consumption accounts for nearly 70% of tourists in France." [7]

[4] Jean Carlos Vieira Santos. Resenha. TURISMO EM PORTUGAL: SUCESSOS E INSUCESSOS. Brazilian Geographical Journal: Geosciences and Humanities research medium, Ituiutaba, v. 6, n. 1, , jan./jun. 2015. p 319
[5]ALEXANDRE PANOSSO NETTO : What is Tourism? Definitions, Theoretical Phases and Principles , Edited by John Trib , Philosophicol lssues in Touris , Channel view Publications decembre 2009 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292509066 , p 44
[6] Dave Chaffey & Fiona Ellis-Chadwick : Marketing digital, 7e edition , Pearson France ,2020 , p 7 .
[7]Cabrespines Jean-Louis et Régis Wargnier : Tourisme et numérique journal official DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE Français Mandature 2015-2020 – Séance du 12 décembre 2017

France has now achieved the world's most visited country for tourists 2018, an increase of 3.6 million compared to 2017. 54 billion euros in revenue or 8% of the country's GDP. The sector creates 1.27 million jobs in France throughout the year. E-tourism has also seen a tremendous increase in recent years and has gradually revolutionized the sector, in 2018, internet sales accounted for 60% of business volume in this highly competitive sector. For the hotel industry, online bookings now account for 70% of the market.[8]

To achieve these figures, the tourism sector had to keep pace with the digital development that the world has known. France relied on integrating this sector with the digital field, technology and information, and providing it with digital technologies and platforms to overcome the traditional challenges of managing tourist destinations, increasing their competitiveness, mitigating risks, and being innovative and dependent on artificial and digital intelligence. "The2013 VHF France national plan sets a target for full coverage of housing and commercial buildings at a very high speed by 2022, and the preliminary assessment (2017) shows an 8.6% increase in one year in that "[9]

E-tourism, also called digital tourism, has revolutionized the tourism industry in recent years. In 2018, e-tourism represented 60% of the market share of the tourism sector. Therefore, in recent years, the Internet has profoundly modified the consumption habits of the tourism sector. The main players in e-tourism are airlines, railways, hotel comparisons and flights such as Trivago, Booking, Kayak or Liligo. However, traditional players such as SNCF, Eurostar, Air France and even Club Med have been able to leverage digital technology in order to boost their brand and improve their turnover thanks to digital .[10]

Several forms of digital tourism can be distinguished : mobile tourism(mobile phone) ,social tourism (social networks)Thomas Dom cites in writing -from a dream trip to mass tourism- to emphasize the crucial role of social media, in the Indonesian village of Kampong Pelangi, in central Java. "His pictures of houses painted in rainbow colors have roamed the planet on the social network Instagram giving part of the population and neighboring villages the idea of painting more and more houses and thus attracting more and more tourists[11]."

Means and actors in e-tourism:

They are everything that combines tourism and the Internet. The means and actors in this sector that the traveler resorts to are different, the most important of which are :

_ Travel Agencies: They provide travel related services, booking tickets ,hotels, insurance and the best options available

_ Tourist offices and tour operators : Today there are between 400 and 500 tour operators in France, dominated by a few key players such as Club Med, Pierre et Vacances and Nouvelles

[8]Dornbusch Jérémie: Le marketing dans le secteur du tourisme www.1min30.com/inbound-marketing/le-marketing-tourisme-1287488776 le 13/12/2020 à 14:30
[9] Jean-LouisCabrespines et Régis Wargnier : Ibid P 22
[10] Voir , JérémieDornbusch : Ibid
[11]Michel Waintrop : Les nouvelles stratégies pour attirer les touristes, www.la-croix.com/Economie/Economie-et-entreprises/nouvelles-strategies-attirer-touristes-2019-07-08-1201034034 le 12/12/2020 à 10:00

Frontières,[12] offering comprehensive services to travelers from accommodation, transportation ,tours and other services .

_ Transport: As air, sea and land transport varied in 2018, France grew by 2.1% thanks to strong growth in international air traffic, following an increase of +8.6% in 2017. Passenger traffic within kilometers carried by the French flag grew by 4.7% in 2018 and the proportion of foreign companies increased by 8.9%. [13]"In France in 2018, the car is the preferred mode of transport for the French with 84% of the market, followed by the plane and then the train" [14]

_Places to stay: hotels, camps, houses that receive tourists ...etc.)

Tourism strategy in France

On June 11, 2015, the French General Council took several measures to improve the reception and offer of tourism to encourage tourism, the most important of which are "11 destination contracts, 5 poles of excellence, visas less than 48 hours for Chinese and Indian tourists in particular, cleaning of highways in the Ile de France, welcome SMS for Chinese tourists, etc . In one year, France moved from seventh to second place globally in the ranking established by the World Economic Forum among the 40 proposals contained in the report of the General Council, which fall under the box of success, which are the four basic areas in which tourism must continue to advance digitally, hospitality, training, investment and these are the most important:[15]

• Improve reception which should become a national priority, facilitate the acquisition of visas, enrich tourism content in global media and manage it smoothly and launch a large communication campaign about hospitality for French and professionals.

• Adopt a cohesive promotion strategy around a number of brands in the destination with a global reputation and develop a high-quality and diversified tourism offering.

• Develop an investment strategy for tourism with the establishment of a dedicated investment fund.

• Development of digital technologies, including reform of the tourism promotion portal, high-speed coverage of tourist areas, unification of actors around a regional brand and international promotion of these destinations

• Support initiatives that highlight the diversity of land and products. Traditional heritage and also our intangible heritage, especially gastronomy.

[12] Voir , JérémieDornbusch : Ibid
[13]LOMONACO Jean-Christophe, La croissance de la consommation touristique en France se confirme en 2018 ÉTUDES ÉCONOMIQUES Le 4 pages de la DGE(direction générale des entreprises) n° 91 Ivry-sur-Seine France , December 2019
[14] Voir , JérémieDornbusch: Ibid
[15]La stratégie pour un tourisme français leader mondial publié sous la présidence de François Hollande du 15 mai 2012 au 15 mai 2017 www.gouvernement.fr/action/la-strategie-pour-un-tourisme-francais-leader-mondial Innover pour retrouver de la croissance

• Create five poles of excellence: agritourism and wine tourism pole, mountain tourism pole, ecotourism /knowledge tourism pole (handicrafts, luxury), urban and night tourism pole. These poles aim to develop and increase the visibility of the French tourism offer internationally

• Funding these distinct sectors through the Future Investment Program.

• Facilitate access to French territory

• Extension of the 48-hour visa initiative : Launched in China in early 2014, this measure has increased the number of visas granted from 30 to 250%. It was extended within 12 months to several Gulf countries, South Africa and India.

• Ensuring the safety of tourists: The Tourism Safety Plan provides for an increase in the number of police officers

In the digital and technological field

• Promoting tourism professions and strengthening vocational training with a focus on foreign language proficiency, quality of service, digital literacy and general culture.

• Improved welcome : welcome messages, posters indicating emblematic places to be seen in France, multilingual interactive kiosks at the aircraft exit or information screens in airport baggage drop-off areas, at terminals(Gare du Nord is the first stop in Europe) to better guide tourists when they arrive, joint signage developed by STIF and relevant officials

• Promote the Parafe system for automatic and instant passport control, particularly among European tourists.

• Develop innovative geo location services to encourage the mobility of tourists throughout France and facilitate their orientation.

•Leveraging major regional events and amplifying global tourism communications while promoting selected topics and disseminating information as widely as possible to give maximum visibility to the region's offerings, particularly on regional web-based tourism systems and promotion of the tourism enterprise and its online visibility are essential for cultural and heritage tourism. The entertainment sector, attractions and cultural venues include 2,960 companies striving to integrate their sites into a offering that extends to other services and activities to meet customer demand [16]

• Improving working conditions, developing training in hospitality and establishing the Technological Baccalaureate in hotel catering at the beginning of the 2015 academic year, while enhancing the skills of "interpersonal skills and the practice of foreign languages

• Rely on digital and be a champion in e-tourism by implementing the free WiFi deployment plan in highly touristic places and hotels by promoting it and ensuring the quality of Internet access in these areas

• Launch a competition to create innovative applications for smartphones: you will accompany tourists during their stay (machine translation or emergency services applications

[16]Bruno Retailleau : Schéma régional de développement du tourisme et des loisirs 2016/2020 Impression : Edicolor (35)Région des Pays de la Loire , France , May 2017

• Better structuring digital tools by reforming the portal dedicated to promoting tourism and developing digital applications .

• Defending fair competition, by ensuring respect for French brands in search engine results and strengthening the distinction between commercial sites and comparisons .

• Encourage a stronger presence of the theme of tourism in France in French media abroad and on international television channels.

• Developing vacations available to all, a portal will be dedicated to low-income families in order to support them in preparing their project and a selection of reasonable offers will be offered at preferential prices .

• Distant markets, prospecting and diversification : Its goalis to obtain foreign overnight stays, it must rely on prospecting for distant emerging and growing markets, such as China (+ 1.1 million overnight stays); or prospecting for customers whose access to our territory is facilitated by the presence of a direct airline, such as Canada with the Montreal-Nantes route. Detection and prospecting of tourism investors, including the implementation of a strategy for targeted prospecting of national and international investors and operators in the field of tourism, together with all relevant actors. Providing vast tracts of land for the development of themed resorts (wine tourism and the region made the rural world one of its priorities, there are two active associations Accueil paysan and Bienvenue à la ferme, horse racing, golf, seawater therapy, etc.) and the development of tourism and water sports[17].

• Overseas visitor survey, conducted by DGE and the Bank of France, monitoring tourist behaviour on French territory for people living abroad and associated expenses .[18]

Regionally

Regionally, it relied on the regional tourism strategy and relied on different nature such as coasts, rivers, small villages, large cities and tourism companies, which are the engines of tourism growth and focused on direct contact with the regional tourism committee and all relevant professional actors. "Four operational priorities have been identified for the regional tourism development strategy : more attractiveness to conquer the international market, more balance to support all regions ,more competitiveness to support professionals in developing their offerings ,more proximity and on the new communication strategy, strengthening international actions, supporting tourism sectors, innovating on the topic of online bookings in particular, and supporting tourism investments are part of the key operational actions of this new strategy. Within 7 areas: finance, marketing and communication, regional leadership on key regional issues, regional and international support to sites and sectors, monitoring and forecasting, professionalism, and joint governance"[19].

Second: Digital marketing of the tourist brand in France

To achieve the desired goal or multiple goals of online marketing, you must adopt a strategy in which the business plan emerges. The main goalmay be to increase the number of

[17] Voir, Bruno Retailleau : Ibid
[18]Abdel Khiati Atlas DU tourism EN France Édition 2018 La Direction générale des entreprises (DGE) mai 2018 Ivry-sur-Seine
[19] Voir, Bruno Retailleau : Ibid

potential customers based on all interactive digital tools to promote products and services, Internet hotspots, smartphones, tablets, etc

For Laurent Florès, digital marketing stems from two developments : [20]

_Massive development of Internet-related uses (e-commerce, social networks, etc.)

_Mainstreaming the use of new media for increasingly complex ICTs (mobile telephony, multifunction smartphones, laptop, nomadic computer, development of ADSL and 4G lines, and now fiber optics).

In France, over the past five years, the term "digital marketing" has experienced strong growth and is widely used (+75 times based on 100) of the term "digital marketing". The latter is equal to or almost equal to 0, which means that in France, there is less than 1% of recorded correspondence compared to the term "digital marketing".[21]

Many regions and departments have embarked on online marketing through marketplace application. It is a marketing platform that puts the user and service provider in direct contact. Institutional partners therefore position themselves as business providers. [22]

The Digital marketing is expressed through a set of strategies and supports aimed at attracting, acquiring and then retaining new customers. It relies on techniques from traditional marketing, and also on new strategies made possible by the emergence of digital technologies...Web marketing tools can be divided into three groups: paid, owned and earned media [23]

Marketing and communication are elements that will help you make your customers aware of the value of your offer. Perceived value is customers' perception of what they get (perceived benefits) for what they deliver (perceived costs).[24] These benefits vary from product quality, price, functions, costs, and information about everything related to the product and its risks...etc.

To determine an appropriate communication and marketing policy and business plan, you must identify the main objectives to which the communication will be directed, identify the message and choose a brand and means of communication and available channels appropriate to the goal .Therefore, communication is all means and techniques in the service of a marketing goal. We explain below the relationship between tourist communication, digital communication and marketing

Tourist contact

Cutting tourist contact is a long way off, especially as it evolves with technology. Its aim is to understand how and why tourism, the motives of tourists, and the patterns of building their representations ... It is the analysis of specific modes of communication, the study of the exchanges that take place, the consequences for everyone of the length of the tourist migration period, the

20 Martin Béatrice: Le marketing digital ses formes et ses enjeux pour une communication interactive et personnalisée avec les consommateurs Académie de Versailles, Centre de Ressources en Économie-Gestion, publiée le 3 septembre 2013, www.creg.ac-versailles.fr/Le-marketing-digital#outil_sommaire
[21]Marrone Rémy ,claire Gallic: Le grand livre de marketing digital :tendance , outils & stratégie , site web , référencement & contenu publicité en ligne , réseaux sociaux & influence, Dunod, Malakoff , France, 2018
[22] Voir, Bruno Retailleau : Ibid
[23] Rémy Marrone ,claire Gallic : Ibid p 33
[24] Voir, Béatrice Martin : Ibid

place of technology in human relations, etc. To promote the development of tourism that is well managed and accepted by the sending and receiving population. It can only help to anticipate the problems that are likely to arise from social exchange which is the very nature of tourism and which makes it rich.[25]

Digital communication: Digital

Communication covers fame and image goals (brands) but also performance (sales and database enrichment). New channels emerge, such as search engines (allowing for more relevant targeting, inclusion in the customer journey) and display (advertising in the form of banners, paving stones, etc.). These communication tools allow brands to create new contacts, to be more connected to their goals[26].

Digital communication brings all the goals of communication together: brands, what distinguishes the tourist area, what is new in it, serving the visitor and its image forits fame to attract the tourist, actions towards sales and performance

The fundamental difference between tourist communication and marketing is that marketing seeks more to provide an immediate response to material problems in the first place. Tourist communication aspires to long-term thinking, taking into account the complexity of the facts, and focusing on both the tourist and the guest. Financial profit is not the main goal, but human and environmental profit. It is also a particularly interesting example of intercultural communication Tourism should also be understood as a form of communication... Let's not forget that tourism is not limited to practice per se but consists of information research, comparisons ...Etc. .[27]

Tourism marketing is defined as the set of elements that allow the design, promotion and marketing of products and services for tourism....By e-tourism we mean selling tourism-related services online (setting a destination, buying transportation, developing a itinerary, booking a stay, exchanging information with other internet users.) This sector of activity is rich and takes into account many players, whether transport, accommodation, tour operators or even promotional organizations.[28]

We cannot separate communication from tourism marketing to reach the underlined goals. The main goal of marketing is to reach the customer and bring him to the destination and spend tourism in this specific area. You must take into account what this area is characterized by and what you want to attract the tourist and also his capabilities as day travelers, short-term residents, locals or foreigners

Tourism marketing must be carried out on the right scale, with the target force being the strongest:[29]

• For regional customers: API

[25]Viallon Philippe : La communication touristique,une triple invention Chronique scientifique Mondes du Tourisme ,Gastronomie et développement local , openedition journals n°171, 07/2013
[26] Voir, Béatrice Martin : Ibid
[27] Philippe Viallon : Ibid P 6
[28] Voir, JérémieDornbusch: Ibid
[29]Bacquet Jean-Paul, Maguy Lagarde : Stratégie ET plan D'ACTIONS marketing tourism Direction Économie et attractivité Agglo Pays d 'Issoire (API) ; Issoire , France, 2019 P

• For national customers: API in partnership with the region

• For International Clients: Region.

The **rules and objectives** of the **tourism marketing strategy in France :** This strategy is based on five rules: _ Developing and qualifying the offer: Introducing new structural products, enhancing the tourism business, rehabilitating and revitalizing the current offer, enhancing access to destinations, developing the intangible offer: reception, training and services, and raising awareness of the new classification and qualification policy for tourist accommodation

_ Leveraging the strengths of sustainable tourism development: raising awareness of France's strengths in relation to sustainable development, repositioning the French offer by harmonizing labeling policies, improving the profitability of investments by distributing attendees

- Intensify distribution: Get a detailed understanding of the distribution structure market by market, conquer online distribution networks by playing on a wide range of offerings, create a national operator that ensures the aggregation of the offer, restore the French programming generalists on the "vacation" offer, and make more use of the "revenue management" according to the objectives, destinations, offers and distribution methods, promote the French tourism engineering offer

- Reorientation of promotion policy: an open national platform strategy, building a global network of influence based on different channels, relying on the French brand and a range of destination brands

- Building assessment tools: Obtaining a system to guide the tourism economy (attendance, economic benefits, employment), having performance indicators for the implemented policies and processes used, developing an economic intelligence network and a permanent standard.

Conclusion

France has reached the first ranks in the increasing number of tourists according to a strategy that supported its economy so that tourism is one of the strongest industries in France and has developed faster in the context of digital structural transformation and control of information related to the field of tourism has become a key issue to support appropriate, sustainable and expected decision-making when possible, on future developments as well as for tourism actors and destinations

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